

D. Ellberg

MEMORANDUM

7/5/68

TO: T. Kiley, Col. M. Wakin
FROM: A. Sweetland
SUBJECT: SUGGESTIONS FOR IMMEDIATE RESEARCH ON TASK C ET SEQ
COPIES TO: J. Digby, A. Mengel, G. Shubert, Col. F. P. Serong,
M. Schaffer

Now that we are moving towards closure on the initial phases of the exercise it seems to me that we should readdress the general problem of the VCI (Viet Cong Infrastructure), this time stressing the "elimination and/or neutralization" of the infrastructure.

Thus far we have been looking at the world principally through the eyes of the CIA and "elimination" has been defined as being synonymous with "kidnapping" (with an occasional hasty aside that admits that assassination is included as a part of the definition).

It is my feeling that it is now time to extend our current definition. I fear that the CIA solution does not consider the possibility that we (like Hercules) may be dealing with a hydra-headed monster who grows two heads for every head removed.

As you recall, Hercules failed in his attempt to destroy the monster until he discovered a way to prevent the regeneration of the new heads--all of which is a pedantic way of stressing the point that we should have more than one way to skin a cadre.

I think that we have now reached a state of development where it would be profitable to discuss additional ways to "eliminate and/or neutralize" the infrastructure. The following ideas (most of which stemmed from the exploratory interviews) are intended to foster thinking toward these wider horizons.

A. SMALL SWEEP OPERATIONS

Some of the preliminary statistical explorations made by M. Schaffer showed that the number of small sweep operations without contact was highly correlated with most of several measures of

pacification that were available. The greater the number of small sweep operations, the better the pacification scores.*

Pursuing this in the interviews, I have found that both POWs and ralliers agree that such operations have a devastating effect on infrastructure. The sample is small and little credence can be placed on the information. Despite this, all the respondents agree that the small sweep is effective. The only disagreement is that the chieu hois say that the sweep operations will eventually pacify a village while the prisoners tended to feel that the village will remain at the contested level (particularly if located in main force area of responsibility). It is worth noting that Bing West also had similar observations (in D-17095 ARPA). Bing describes the effects of the CAP (Combined Action Platoon), while Marv's data refer to SVN actions. I think the whole matter is worth exploring further both by the interviewing route such as we have been doing and also by the statistical route as Marv has been doing.

I also think that we should get some crude cost calculations into the act. (The following is not a costing model; it is only illustrative of what might be found by a costing model.)

For example, with one rallier I used 5 hamlets as a costing basis. He felt that, on an average, one sweep every 5 days would be sufficient (this should be a random bag of both day and night sweeps with and without forewarning).

He estimated that if the village consisted of 2 liberated and 3 contested hamlets that it would take 100 men to conduct the necessary sweeps. But if the village consisted of 5 contested hamlets, it would take only 30 men. Once all 5 hamlets were pacified it should take only 15 men to keep out the infrastructure. Formal calculation, of course, would be mandatory in any costing venture.

Note that in the type of sweeps we are discussing there is a hidden asset: there are no refugees. All villagers are encouraged to remain in their own homes on their own land, to continue life as usual.

* For expository purposes I am deliberately implying a causality which may, or may not, exist. It may be that small sweeps are only made under safe circumstances.

Pushing forth into this latter avenue we (the respondent and I) concluded that villagers should never be requested to take any sort of actions that might be held against them later, i.e. do not ask them to take sides. The VC can and often do return, and punishment may result. One of the worst things you can do is to say that you will never leave, that you will always be there to protect. This only ruins your credibility the first time the VC return. Rather, put up some civic improvement like a school or a market for the VC to destroy. This way you will be perceived as the guy who creates something for the people while the VC will be seen as the guy that destroys the things of the people.

This example is an attempt to illustrate an "alternate strategy" of dealing with the infrastructure. Further, I am attempting to show all sides of the alternate strategy: political, military, psychological, economic, etc. Obviously with our limited staff we cannot entertain the idea of making a complete study on any "alternate strategy." We can, and should, however, sketch the alternate strategy so completely that it can be used as a preliminary study for formal research, i.e. formal research can begin without further investigation.

B. MAKING THE JOB DIFFICULT

As you know, we are beginning the process of getting better approximations on the relative importance of the VCI functions as well as the relative importance of the various duties within each function. This is, of course, to order priorities of attack: some functions are of such little value to the party (i.e. women's organization) that they are not worth any effort. Others (i.e. secretaries) are of such value as to make almost any effort worth while. This ordering, however, is not enough. What we also need is a long list of ideas (similar to the long list of patterns) of how to make each duty more difficult. Here are a few gleaned from exploratory interviews:

One of the duties of the production cadre is to deliver rice stored in the village to a point where it can be picked up by the main force. The question is how to make this job difficult or impossible. To make the game a little more sporting, the

production cadre does not have rice stored in a single place, but rather scattered around in the various homes in the village. This is to make it tough for us on our sweeps; there is no way of telling a VC rice kernel from a villager's rice kernel. With a little ingenuity we should be able to use a variation of the VC theme. We ask the home owner how many mau of rice he farms. If there is one mau of harvest land he should have farmed approximately 40 gia of rice in normal conditions. But if he has 120 gia stored, we take 80 gia and leave him 40 for his family's use.

Or take a second case. Our production cadre has cleared 3 mau of forest land for growing rice and manioc. Part of this will be used to support himself and the remainder goes to the Front. For security reasons he must grow it in a liberated area. So we use herbicide. The only thing he will be able to save will be manioc and then only if the roots are in the edible stage. To do this he must cut the plants immediately (before the chemical can get to the roots).

Take another case. One of the jobs of the military proselytor is to find disenchanted GVN and attempt to convert them to the VC side. Business is usually slow since not too many people are eager to join the Front. As a consequence, he has to send back a lot of reports saying "Things are tough, maybe next month business will pick up." Too many of these reports don't set well with the authorities who tend to send replies saying "We are interested in results, not excuses." This tends to make the guy eager, and in this frame of mind the only really sympathetic thing is to offer him a disgruntled GVN. Maybe even two.

Unfortunately it just happens that the disgruntled members are coy. They are not sure that they really want to take the big step: they have heard a lot of good things about the Front but they have also heard a few things that make them stop and think. With a little effort in this direction they should be able to keep the guy on a string for months occupying his valuable time, maybe even getting him to the point where he wants to give up the whole thing and join the RVN. Then he wouldn't have to make out those damned reports.

As we get more and more into the interviewing it is becoming more apparent that the VC/NLF at this date no longer seem to be interested in winning "the hearts and minds" of the people. Rather they seem

to have the attitude voiced by Alexander Hamilton, "The people, sir, are a great beast." What they want from the people is cow-like behavior that provides for two things: taxation and recruits. Although the question of how to deprive them of one or the other is somewhat remote from our objective of how to dry up the infrastructure, it is apparent that the objective which says: "Deprive them of taxes and recruits" is implemented in a manner considerably different from an objective that says: "Attrit them." The point being made is another variation on our theme that there is more than one way to neutralize the infrastructure.

C. ASSASSINATION VERSUS ARREST VERSUS CHIEU HOI, ETC.

Phoenix has provided several alternatives that can be used to neutralize positions in the Table of Organization. With the exception of the case of the "turn-around" (i.e. the cadre maintains his position in the Front but serves as an agent) all of these alternatives result in an empty slot in the Table of Organization. (Some of our respondents, as will be shown, have provided some alternatives that Phoenix did not think of, but these also result in an empty slot in the Table of Organization.)

At a cursory glance all of the variations have the same cost to the organization: the slot is open and somebody must be found to fill it. If you think about this, the thought occurs that the sequelae of some of the alternatives are more disruptive than others. If the fellow is assassinated (and the body left in situ) it is evident that no information has been leaked. In contrast, if the fellow is a chieu hoi the chances are that a great deal of vital information has been leaked. Hence rallying is followed by a scramble of relocation and reorganization with the unit going underground until it is safe to surface. This has possibilities. What we need are two things: (1) an extension of the gamut of alternatives and (2) the rank-order of these alternatives in terms of the amount of disruption they cause to the organization. This restatement of objectives has led to the following discoveries:

It makes a difference how you arrest a man. If you merely walk in and nab him the result is only the normal amount of consternation. However, if you make the arrest in such a manner that it looks like the fellow arranged to be arrested (only the slightest

hint is necessary) the effect is the same as if the fellow were a chieu hoi. There is even a greater dividend. If you then hold him a few weeks and let him go he is now suspect. The party immediately removes him from his position and puts him under constant surveillance. The result of this humiliation is a potential chieu hoi.

One of the chieu hois had this anecdote: a cadre was captured. Since they suspected that he would talk under pressure they arranged to have a letter intercepted that indicated he was a double agent. The RVN immediately killed him.

Two can play this game. Every chieu hoi and every staged arrest is good for one "thank you for your assistance in helping me get away" note, which is good for one demotion and surveillance; even if the Front is quite sure that the letter is a put up job, their security requirements are so urgent that they must react. (Incidentally it is mandatory that you spend some time getting the picture of the acute security requirements the VC/NLF use to understand how this two-edged sword can be used to good advantage.)

When a person becomes a chieu hoi you have reaction time considerations. You have, at most, 24 hours to take advantage of his information. This is the maximum. Most respondents agree that maximum reaction time is more like 12 hours. What this means is that in half a day the chieu hoi will be discovered, the word will be passed and the relocation process will be initiated. You will catch no one. Hence if you are thinking of using the chieu hois as a means of making mass arrests you must have a mechanism for reacting within a half-day. If 24 hours have passed, forget it. Relax and enjoy yourself. Now your recourse is to milk the guy for details that can be used in some other way at some other time.

My a priori hypothesis was that the rank order effectiveness of the three major elimination alternatives would be:

1. Assassinate (least effective)
2. Arrest
3. Chieu Hoi

This was based on the theses:

1. The body is prima facie evidence that no information was leaked.

2. You are not sure whether or not the individual talked.
3. You are quite sure that the individual not only talked but may cooperate in location and identification.

My respondents assured me my hypothesis was incorrect, that there is little difference between the first and second: old cadres never talk, they are only whisked away. This is, of course, not entirely true. Some cadres can eventually be gotten to talk. But it can take several months to break them down. I am not sure how much practical value that information several months old has.

It is desirable to point out that the attitudes of the cadres you capture covers a much wider continuum than is implied here. The range is from the fanatic which borders on paranoia (the fellow they gave me in Da Nang could be certified as insane in the US) to those at the other end who probably would have rallied if they had been confronted with the proper situation.

However, we are not concerned with the attitudes of the cadres but rather with the effects of the alternatives on the system. Here we seem to be dealing with a flip-flop mechanism--the chieu hoi (and the apparent chieu hoi) really shakes the system. In contrast, those alternatives that do not affect security have no more effect than if the fellow had been removed by natural causes: illness, death or promotion. Hence, to shake the system we need ingenious methods of getting security to push the panic button. Our problem is made easier by the fact that security always has its finger poised to do just that.

D. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF THE CHIEU HOI

As we have now seen there are at least two things that devastate the infrastructure: frequent small scale sweep operations and the chieu hoi. Despite the fact that we already have a tremendous amount of information on the chieu hoi (do we have a protocol on a rallier who has not been asked the question, "why"), I am not satisfied on two counts: (1) the approach to date has been informal and (2) devoid of interviewing in depth. Under no circumstances should this statement be interpreted as a backhanded slap at the

efforts to date. It merely says that the approach has not included formal (statistical) experimental design and that there have been no head-candlers in the act. These no longer need be true.

My proposal is to begin with the findings shown in the little study I did (D 16883) which isolated 99 variables significantly related to being a rallier. This list needs to be extended to include a large number of items of "reasons why he did not rally." This revised list should be offered to a couple of chieu hoi centers. Following some modest statistical processing to determine the critical items, we should end up with about 50 items, half describing the reasons for rallying and half describing the factors that deterred rallying. These 50 items are now given to ralliers in binary form: Score "1" if the item is one of his reasons for rallying (or not rallying). If not, score "0". Processing from this point on is identical to that described in D 16883 with the exception that we shall use oblique rotation of the factor matrix. The reasoning follows:

One of the objectives of psychotherapy is to help the client make insights. Without getting into long and ponderous explanations, this process consists, in part, of helping the person put into intellectual terms (i.e. words) affective (emotional) elements. The process is not that of getting him to describe his emotions, rather it is one of getting him to express his emotions in a form where he can intellectualize about them and thus handle them constructively. Believe me, insights are hard to come by. But there are techniques one can use to facilitate their appearance.

Using these techniques we (Miss Kim Vinh and I) are beginning to uncover the agonies that one must go through when arriving at the decision to become a chieu hoi. This is associated with the discovery that the value system the party really has is not the one that it said it had, and is not the one that the individual "bought" when he joined up. To wit: the value system that was bought was "The party is for the people and the unification of Vietnam, at which point everybody will be free and happy and have a good life." It is the realization of the falseness of this type of statement that is the long painful process. One resists it as long as he can. To accept the truth (which can confront him on a daily basis) means that everything he thought and everything he believed to this point has been wrong. One must admit the loss of years of effort if he admits the truth.

One sees the same painful analogue in the clinical setting when trying to get the mother to accept the fact that her child is mentally retarded. She has feared that this might be so and she uses every defense mechanism she can create to avoid discovering the truth which confronts her daily. Even when she does finally accept the truth she generally has guilt feelings: somehow it is her fault.

The same thing is showing up with the chieu hois--they remember all the things they did which were consonant with a set of values which they now perceive as a lie. (The chieu hoi now sees the party as a vicious monster concerned only with its own interests--self-preservation and aggression, as something that is interested only in having automatons producing tax and recruits 24 hours a day.) When he truly looks around the chieu hoi sees no place in the system for the things that people are interested in having--freedom to think, freedom to travel, freedom to get ahead, based on his own capabilities. As I said, it is an agonizing process.

How typical this agonizing appraisal is, I don't know. It has been characteristic of everybody we have probed (a pitifully tiny number). The most intelligent chieu hoi I have talked with (an MD from North Vietnam) said the following: "I believe this is characteristic of almost everybody in this place (i.e. in the chieu hoi center), but I don't think that many of them would be able to express it in words." Overcoming this latter, of course, is the head-candler's responsibility.

If what the doctor believes is true, that this realization is the basic distinction of the chieu hoi, it means that getting the person to this point is not a trivial task nor will it be done quickly. If so, so be it. It also implies that even if we build a school 20 times and that the VC tear it down 20 times this can be a good thing--there were 20 demonstrations that show that one group was for the people and 20 more that the other was not for the people. Among these witnesses will be some VC/NLF taking a long second look at the discrepancy between the stated value system and the behavior. Considered in this manner the price of 20 schools is cheap.

Returning to the statistical approach, if the phenomenon just described is both true and pervasive, it should appear in the analysis as either a primary order factor, probably something like the first factor isolated by the principal axis method (see pl 23, D 16883), or as a second order factor having this factor as a dominant element. I suspect the latter because of the low loading of the

item "Subject is a Rallier" in this factor. Hence the need to be able to do oblique rotation, a feature that UCLA has recently added to the BIMD series, fortunately.

If the phenomenon is true and pervasive, I would also expect a large amount of rallying from the NVA since they have had a lot more firsthand experience functioning as automatons for a war machine. "Revisionism," note well, has a much more profound meaning for them than it ever will for you or me or the NLF.

Since the chieu hoi study is not as immediately related to our current needs I suggest that we keep it simmering on the back burner as a low priority item.

E. THE ALLIANCE PARTY(S)

The final item is indeed remote from our current objectives but I would like us to spend a little time investigating it so that it does not appear as an unexpected bolt from the blue if anything materializes.

It is hard to tell just exactly what is happening, but one gets the impression that everybody and his brother is starting a new group. All have the common characteristics:

1. The titles contain the words "alliance, people, democracy," and either "neutralism" or "peace."
2. They want the war to stop.
3. They want an end to corruption.
4. They want human rights and individual justice and the four freedoms originally espoused by Roosevelt.
5. They frequently imply some kind of coalition which contains all classes: the rich, poor, intellectual, artisans, etc.

I have talked at length with one old-time party member who denies that the communist party has anything to do with the alliance he was talking about--in fact one of the house rules was that no

party member would be permitted to join. In contrast, another old-time party member said the whole thing was being sponsored by the Front and that the "sweet words in the title were used to fool the people." I was ready to throw the whole thing out until I read a newspaper release by Thieu who said that he would welcome the appearance of something of the nature of an alliance or coalition. What his motivation was did not show through.

At any rate, I think that 10-15 minutes of probing during the interviews will be a welcome change of pace from the data collection process. It will also insure that we don't get caught with an embarrassing lack of information.

F. CAPITULATION

It is now evident that the amount of data that we need to acquire is formidable. It is also evident that we shall have to adopt formalized interviewing that doesn't include any of the old delightful rambling explorations that are so stimulating to read.

There is such a diversity of requirements that it will be almost impossible to train a single Vietnamese to do all parts of it. As a solution I suggest that you gather your ideas to add to the above and that we meet for a few hours to see if (1) there is some happy means of formalizing the data collecting, and (2) some way of developing specialization among the interviewers.

Andy

A. Sweetland